

To the Members of the California State Assembly:

I am returning Assembly Bill 81 without my signature.

California's Safe Surrender Law already provides an emergency alternative for a woman in crisis who may otherwise abandon, abuse, or kill her baby. California's law was carefully crafted to balance the creation of a safe surrender option while preserving the rights of children. The current 72-hour period contained in law allows for a no-questions-asked safe surrender of a newborn, and is supported by research and statistics which indicate that most neonaticide occurs within the first day. Experts have raised concerns that instead of improving child safety, increasing the time that a baby may be surrendered from 72 hours will put newborns in greater risk by keeping them in an unsafe environment without proper care and supervision.

For these reasons, I am returning this bill without my signature.

Sincerely,

Arnold Schwarzenegger